



## A doubly critical semilinear heat equation in the $L^1$ space

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*Abstract.* We study the existence and nonexistence for a Cauchy problem of the semilinear heat equation:

$$\begin{cases} \partial_t u = \Delta u + |u|^{p-1}u & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T), \\ u(x, 0) = \phi(x) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^N \end{cases}$$

in  $L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ . Here,  $N \geq 1$ ,  $p = 1 + 2/N$  and  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  is a possibly sign-changing initial function. Since  $N(p - 1)/2 = 1$ , the  $L^1$  space is scale critical and this problem is known as a doubly critical case. It is known that a solution does not necessarily exist for every  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ . Let  $X_q := \{\phi \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^N) \mid \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} |\phi| [\log(e + |\phi|)]^q dx < \infty\} (\subset L^1(\mathbb{R}^N))$ . In this paper, we construct a local-in-time mild solution in  $L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  for  $\phi \in X_q$  if  $q \geq N/2$ . We show that, for each  $0 \leq q < N/2$ , there is a nonnegative initial function  $\phi_0 \in X_q$  such that the problem has no nonnegative solution, using a necessary condition given by Baras–Pierre (Ann Inst Henri Poincaré Anal Non Linéaire 2:185–212, 1985). Since  $X_q \subset X_{N/2}$  for  $q \geq N/2$ ,  $X_{N/2}$  becomes a sharp integrability condition. We also prove a uniqueness in a certain set of functions which guarantees the uniqueness of the solution constructed by our method.

### 1. Introduction and main results

We consider the existence and nonexistence for a Cauchy problem of the semilinear heat equation

$$\begin{cases} \partial_t u = \Delta u + |u|^{p-1}u & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T), \\ u(x, 0) = \phi(x) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^N, \end{cases} \quad (1.1)$$

where  $N \geq 1$ ,  $p = 1 + 2/N$  and  $\phi$  is a possibly sign-changing initial function. When  $\phi \in L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^N)$ , one can easily construct a solution by using a fixed point argument. When  $\phi \notin L^\infty(\mathbb{R}^N)$ , the solvability depends on the balance between the strength of the singularity of  $\phi$  and the growth rate of the nonlinearity. Weissler [13] studied the solvability of (1.1), and obtained the following:

**Proposition 1.1.** *Let  $q_c := N(p - 1)/2$ . Then, the following (i) and (ii) hold:*

- (i) (Existence, subcritical and critical cases) Assume either both  $q > q_c$  and  $q \geq 1$  or  $q = q_c > 1$ . The problem (1.1) has a local-in-time solution for  $\phi \in L^q(\mathbb{R}^N)$ .

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(ii) (Nonexistence, supercritical case) For each  $1 \leq q < q_c$ , there is  $\phi \in L^q(\mathbb{R}^N)$  such that (1.1) has no local-in-time nonnegative solution.

Let  $u(x, t)$  be a function such that  $u$  satisfies the equation in (1.1). We consider the scaled function  $u_\lambda(x, t) := \lambda^{2/(p-1)}u(\lambda x, \lambda^2 t)$ . Then,  $u_\lambda$  also satisfies the same equation. We can easily see that  $\|u_\lambda(x, 0)\|_q = \|u(x, 0)\|_q$  if and only if  $q = q_c$ . It is well known that  $q_c$  is a threshold as Proposition 1.1 shows. However, the case  $q = q_c = 1$ , i.e.,  $p = 1 + 2/N$ , is not covered by Proposition 1.1, and it is known that there is a nonnegative initial function  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  such that (1.1) with  $p = 1 + 2/N$  has no local-in-time nonnegative solution. See Brezis–Cazenave [2, Theorem 11], Celik–Zhou [3, Theorem 4.1] or Laister et al. [7, Corollary 4.5] for nonexistence results. See [1, 6, 11] and references therein for existence and nonexistence results with measures as initial data. In [2, Section 7.5], the case  $p = 1 + 2/N$  is referred to as “doubly critical case.” Several open problems were given in [2]. It was mentioned in [14, p.32] that (1.1) has a local-in-time solution if  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \cap L^q(\mathbb{R}^N)$  for some  $q > 1$ . However, a solvability condition was not well studied. See Table 1. For a detailed history about the existence, nonexistence and uniqueness of (1.1), see [3, Section 1].

In this paper, we obtain a sharp integrability condition on  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  which determines the existence and nonexistence of a local-in-time solution in the case  $p = 1 + 2/N$ . We also show that a solution constructed in Theorem 1.3 is unique in a certain set of functions. Throughout the present paper, we define  $f(u) := |u|^{p-1}u$ . Let  $L^q(\mathbb{R}^N)$ ,  $1 \leq q \leq \infty$ , denote the usual Lebesgue space on  $\mathbb{R}^N$  equipped with the norm  $\|\cdot\|_q$ . For  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ , we define

$$S(t)[\phi](x) := \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G_t(x - y)\phi(y)dy,$$

where  $G_t(x - y) := (4\pi t)^{-N/2} \exp\left(-\frac{|x-y|^2}{4t}\right)$ . The function  $S(t)[\phi]$  is a solution of the linear heat equation with initial function  $\phi$ . We give a definition of a solution of (1.1).

**Definition 1.2.** Let  $u$  and  $\bar{u}$  be measurable functions on  $\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)$ .

(i) (Integral solution) We call  $u$  an integral solution of (1.1) if there is  $T > 0$  such that  $u$  satisfies the integral equation

$$\begin{aligned} u(t) &= \mathcal{F}[u](t) \text{ a.e. } x \in \mathbb{R}^N, \quad 0 < t < T, \quad \text{and} \\ \|u(t)\|_\infty &< \infty \text{ for } 0 < t < T, \end{aligned} \tag{1.2}$$

where

$$\mathcal{F}[u](t) := S(t)\phi + \int_0^t S(t - s)f(u(s))ds.$$

(ii) (Mild solution) We call  $u$  a mild solution if  $u$  is an integral solution and  $u(t) \in C([0, T], L^1(\mathbb{R}^N))$ .

Table 1. Existence and nonexistence of a local-in-time solution of (1.1) in  $L^q(\mathbb{R}^N)$

Ranges of $q$	$1 \leq q < q_c$ Supercritical	$1 = q = q_c$ Doubly critical	$1 < q = q_c$ Critical	$q > q_c, q \geq 1$ Subcritical
Existence/ nonexistence	Not always Exist Proposition 1.1(ii)	Not always Exist exist: [14, p.32], Theorem 1.3(i) Not exist: [2, 3, 7], Theorem 1.3(ii)	Exist Proposition 1.1(i)	Exist Proposition 1.1(i)

(iii) We call  $\bar{u}$  a supersolution of (1.1) if  $\bar{u}$  satisfies the integral inequality  $\mathcal{F}[\bar{u}](t) \leq \bar{u}(t) < \infty$  for a.e.  $x \in \mathbb{R}^N, 0 < t < T$ .

For  $0 \leq q < \infty$ , we define a set of functions by

$$X_q := \left\{ \phi(x) \in L^1_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^N) \mid \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} |\phi| [\log(e + |\phi|)]^q dx < \infty \right\}.$$

It is clear that  $X_q \subset L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  and that  $X_{q_1} \subset X_{q_2}$  if  $q_1 \geq q_2$ . The main theorem of the paper is the following:

**Theorem 1.3.** *Let  $N \geq 1$  and  $p = 1 + 2/N$ . Then, the following (i) and (ii) hold:*

(i) (Existence) *If  $\phi \in X_q$  for some  $q \geq N/2$ , then (1.1) has a local-in-time mild solution  $u(t)$ , and this mild solution satisfies the following:*

$$\text{there is } C > 0 \text{ such that } \|u(t)\|_\infty \leq Ct^{-\frac{N}{2}} (-\log t)^{-q} \text{ for small } t > 0. \quad (1.3)$$

*In particular, (1.1) has a local-in-time mild solution for every  $\phi \in X_{N/2}$ .*

(ii) (Nonexistence) *For each  $0 \leq q < N/2$ , there is a nonnegative initial function  $\phi_0 \in X_q$ , which is explicitly given by (4.1), such that (1.1) has no local-in-time nonnegative integral solution, and hence (1.1) has no local-in-time nonnegative mild solution.*

**Remark 1.4.** (i) The function  $\phi$  in Theorem 1.3(i) is not necessarily nonnegative.

(ii) Theorem 1.3 indicates that  $X_{N/2} \subset L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  is an optimal set of initial functions for the case  $p = 1 + 2/N$  and  $X_{N/2}$  is slightly smaller than  $L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ . This situation is different from the case  $p > 1 + 2/N$ , since (1.1) is always solvable in the scale critical space  $L^{N(p-1)/2}$  for  $p > 1 + 2/N$  (Proposition 1.1 (i)).

(iii)  $L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  is larger than the optimal set for  $p = 1 + 2/N$ . On the other hand, it follows from Proposition 1.1(i) that if  $1 < p < 1 + 2/N$ , then (1.1) has a solution for all  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ . Therefore,  $L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  is small enough for the case  $1 < p < 1 + 2/N$ .

(iv) The function  $\phi_0$  given in Theorem 1.3(ii) is modified from  $\psi(x)$  given by (1.9). This function comes from Baras–Pierre [1], and Theorem 1.3(ii) is a rather easy consequence of [1, Proposition 3.2]. However, we include Theorem 1.3(ii) for a complete description of the borderline property of  $X_{N/2}$ .

(v) Laister et al. [7] obtained a necessary and sufficient condition for the existence of a local-in-time nonnegative solution of

$$\begin{cases} \partial_t u = \Delta u + h(u) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T), \\ u(x, 0) = \phi(x) \geq 0 & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^N. \end{cases} \quad (1.4)$$

They showed that when  $h(u) = u^{1+2/N} [\log(e + u)]^{-r}$ , (1.4) has a local-in-time nonnegative solution for every nonnegative  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  if  $1 < r < \lambda p$ , and (1.4) does not always have if  $0 \leq r \leq 1$ . Here,  $\lambda > 0$  is a certain constant. Therefore, the optimal growth of  $h(u)$  for  $L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  is slightly smaller than  $u^{1+2/N}$ .

- (vi) The exponent  $p = 1 + 2/N$ , which is called Fujita exponent, also plays a key role in the study of global-in-time solutions. If  $1 < p \leq 1 + 2/N$ , then every nontrivial nonnegative solution of (1.1) blows up in a finite time. If  $p > 1 + 2/N$ , then (1.1) has a global-in-time nonnegative solution. See Fujita [4]. In particular, in the case  $p = 1 + 2/N$  we cannot expect a global existence of a classical solution for small initial data.

The next theorem is about the uniqueness of the integral solution in a certain class.

**Theorem 1.5.** *Let  $N \geq 1$ ,  $p = 1 + 2/N$  and  $q > N/2$ . Then, an integral solution  $u(t)$  of (1.1) is unique in the set*

$$\left\{ u(t) \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \mid \sup_{0 \leq t \leq T} t^{N/2} (-\log t)^q \|u(t)\|_\infty < \infty \right\}. \tag{1.5}$$

Therefore, a solution given by Theorem 1.3 is unique.

*Remark 1.6.* (i) If there were a solution that does not satisfy (1.5), then the uniqueness fails. However, it seems to be an open problem.

(ii) In the case  $q = N/2$ , the uniqueness under (1.5) is left open.

(iii) For general  $p$  and  $q$ , the uniqueness of a solution of (1.1) is known in the set

$$\left\{ u(t) \in L^q(\mathbb{R}^N) \mid \sup_{0 \leq t \leq T} t^{\frac{N}{2} \left( \frac{1}{q} - \frac{1}{pq} \right)} \|u(t)\|_{pq} < \infty \right\}.$$

See Haraux–Weissler [5] and [13]. For an unconditional uniqueness with a certain range of  $p$  and  $q$ , see [2, Theorem 4].

- (iv) The nonuniqueness in  $L^q(\mathbb{R}^N)$  is also known for (1.1). For  $p > 1 + 2/N$  and  $1 \leq q < N(p - 1)/2 < p + 1$ , see [5]. For  $p = q = N/(N - 2)$ , see Ni–Sacks [8] and Terraneo [12].

Let us mention technical details. We assume that  $\phi \in X_q$  for some  $q \geq N/2$ . Using a monotone method, we construct a nonnegative mild solution  $w(t)$  of

$$\begin{cases} \partial_t w = \Delta w + f(w) & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T), \\ w(x, 0) = |\phi(x)| & \text{in } \mathbb{R}^N. \end{cases} \tag{1.6}$$

We define  $g(u)$  by

$$g(u) := u [\log(\rho + |u|)]^q, \tag{1.7}$$

where  $\rho > 1$  is chosen appropriately. We will see that if  $\rho \geq e$ , then  $g(u)$  is convex for  $u \geq 0$  and  $g$  plays a crucial role in the construction of the solution of (1.6). In order to construct a nonnegative solution we use a method developed by Robinson–Sierżęga [10] with the convex function  $g$ , which was also used in Hisa–Ishige [6]. We define a sequence of functions  $(u_n)_{n=0}^\infty$  by

$$\begin{cases} u_n(t) = \mathcal{F}[u_{n-1}](t) \text{ for } 0 \leq t < T & \text{if } n \geq 1, \\ u_0(t) = 0. \end{cases} \tag{1.8}$$

Then, we show that  $-w(t) \leq u_n(t) \leq w(t)$  for  $0 \leq t < T$ . Since  $|u_n(t)| \leq w(t)$ , we can extract a convergent subsequence in  $C_{\text{loc}}(\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T))$ , using a parabolic regularization, the dominated convergence theorem and a diagonal argument. The limit function becomes a mild solution of (1.1).

In the nonexistence part, we use a necessary condition for the existence of a nonnegative solution of (1.1) obtained by Baras–Pierre [1], which is stated in Proposition 2.2 in the present paper. Using their result, one can show that there is  $c_0 > 0$  such that if  $\phi(x) \geq c_0 \psi(x)$  in a neighborhood of the origin, then (1.1) has no nonnegative integral solution. Here,

$$\psi(x) := |x|^{-N} (-\log |x|)^{-\frac{N}{2}-1} \quad \text{for } 0 < |x| < 1/e. \tag{1.9}$$

See also [6]. For each  $0 \leq q < N/2$ , we will see that a modified function  $\phi_0$ , which is given by (4.1), belongs to  $X_q$ . We show that  $\phi_0$  does not satisfy the necessary condition for the existence of an integral solution stated in Proposition 2.2. Hence, (1.1) with  $\phi_0$  has no nonnegative solution for each  $0 \leq q < N/2$ .

This paper consists of five sections. In Sect. 2, we recall known results including a monotone method, a necessary condition on the existence for (1.1) and  $L^p$ - $L^q$ -estimates. In Sect. 3, we prove Theorem 1.3(i). In Sect. 4, we prove Theorem 1.3(ii). In Sect. 5, we prove Theorem 1.5.

## 2. Preliminaries

First, we recall the monotonicity method.

**Lemma 2.1.** *Let  $0 < T \leq \infty$ , and let  $f$  be a continuous nondecreasing function such that  $f(0) \geq 0$ . The problem (1.1) has a nonnegative integral solution for  $0 < t < T$  if and only if (1.1) has a nonnegative supersolution for  $0 < t < T$ . Moreover, if a nonnegative supersolution  $\bar{u}(t)$  exists, then the solution  $u(t)$  obtained in this lemma satisfies  $0 \leq u(t) \leq \bar{u}(t)$ .*

*Proof.* This lemma is well known. See [10, Theorem 2.1] for details. However, we briefly show the proof for readers’ convenience.

If (1.1) has an integral solution, then the solution is also a supersolution. Thus, it is enough to show that (1.1) has an integral solution if (1.1) has a supersolution. Let  $\bar{u}$  be a supersolution for  $0 < t < T$ . Let  $u_1 = S(t)\phi$ . We define  $u_n, n = 2, 3, \dots$ , by

$$u_n = \mathcal{F}[u_{n-1}].$$

Then, we can show by induction that

$$0 \leq u_1 \leq u_2 \leq \dots \leq u_n \leq \dots \leq \bar{u} < \infty \quad \text{a.e. } x \in \mathbb{R}^N, \quad 0 < t < T.$$

This indicates that the limit  $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} u_n(x, t)$  which is denoted by  $u(x, t)$  exists for almost all  $x \in \mathbb{R}^N$  and  $0 < t < T$ . By the monotone convergence theorem, we see that

$$\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \mathcal{F}[u_{n-1}] = \mathcal{F}[u],$$

and hence  $u = \mathcal{F}[u]$ . Then,  $u$  is an integral solution of (1.1). It is clear that  $0 \leq u(t) \leq \bar{u}(t)$ . □

Baras–Pierre [1] studied necessary conditions for the existence of an integral solution in the case  $p > 1$ . See also [6] for details of necessary conditions including Proposition 2.2. The following proposition is a variant of [1, Proposition 3.2].

**Proposition 2.2.** *Let  $N \geq 1$  and  $p = 1 + 2/N$ . If  $u(t)$  is a nonnegative integral solution, i.e.,  $u(t)$  satisfies (1.2) with a nonnegative initial function  $\phi$  and some  $T > 0$ , then there exists a constant  $\gamma_0 > 0$  depending only on  $N$  and  $p$  such that*

$$\int_{B(\tau)} \phi(x) dx \leq \gamma_0 |\log \tau|^{-\frac{N}{2}} \text{ for all } 0 < \tau < T, \tag{2.1}$$

where  $B(\tau) := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^N \mid |x| < \tau\}$ .

**Lemma 2.3.** *Let  $q \geq 0$  be fixed, and let*

$$X_{q,\rho} := \left\{ \phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N) \mid \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} |\phi| [\log(\rho + |\phi|)]^q dx < \infty \right\}. \tag{2.2}$$

Then,  $\phi \in X_{q,\rho}$  for all  $\rho > 1$  if and only if  $\phi \in X_{q,\sigma}$  for some  $\sigma > 1$ .

*Proof.* We consider only the case  $q > 0$ . It is enough to show that  $\phi \in X_{q,\rho}$  for all  $\rho > 1$  if  $\phi \in X_{q,\sigma}$  for some  $\sigma > 1$ . Let  $\rho > 1$  be fixed, and let  $\xi(s) := \log(\rho + s)/(\log(\sigma + s))$ . By L'Hospital's rule, we see that  $\lim_{s \rightarrow \infty} \xi(s) = \lim_{s \rightarrow \infty} (s + \sigma)/(s + \rho) = 1$ . Since  $\xi(s)$  is bounded on each compact interval in  $[0, \infty)$ , we see that  $\xi(s)$  is bounded in  $[0, \infty)$ , and hence there is  $C > 0$  such that  $\log(\rho + s) \leq C \log(\sigma + s)$  for  $s \geq 0$ . This inequality indicates that  $\phi \in X_{q,\rho}$  if  $\phi \in X_{q,\sigma}$ . □

Because of Lemma 2.1, we do not care about  $\rho > 1$  in (2.2). In particular, if  $\phi \in X_q$ , then  $\|g(\phi)\|_1 < \infty$  for every  $\rho > 1$ .

**Proposition 2.4.** (i) *Let  $N \geq 1$  and  $1 \leq \alpha \leq \beta \leq \infty$ . There is  $C > 0$  such that, for  $\phi \in L^\alpha(\mathbb{R}^N)$ ,*

$$\|S(t)\phi\|_\beta \leq C t^{-\frac{N}{2}(\frac{1}{\alpha} - \frac{1}{\beta})} \|\phi\|_\alpha \text{ for } t > 0.$$

(ii) *Let  $N \geq 1$  and  $1 \leq \alpha < \beta \leq \infty$ . Then, for each  $\phi \in L^\alpha(\mathbb{R}^N)$  and  $C_0 > 0$ , there is  $t_0 = t_0(C_0, \phi)$  such that*

$$\|S(t)\phi\|_\beta \leq C_0 t^{-\frac{N}{2}(\frac{1}{\alpha} - \frac{1}{\beta})} \text{ for } 0 < t < t_0.$$

For Proposition 2.4(i) (resp. (ii)), see [9, Proposition 48.4] (resp. [2, Lemma 8]). Note that  $C_0 > 0$  in (ii) can be chosen arbitrary small.

We collect various properties of  $g$  defined by (1.7).

**Lemma 2.5.** *Let  $q > 0$  and let  $g_1(s) := s[\log(\rho + s)]^{-q}$ . Then, the following holds:*

- (i) *If  $\rho > 1$ , then  $g'(s) > 0$  for  $s > 0$ .*
- (ii) *If  $\rho \geq e$ , then  $g''(s) > 0$  for  $s > 0$ .*
- (iii) *If  $\rho \geq e$ , then  $g_1(s) \leq g^{-1}(s)$  for  $s \geq 0$ .*
- (iv) *If  $\rho > 1$ , then there is  $C_1 > 0$  such that  $g^{-1}(s) \leq g_1(C_1s)$  for  $s \geq 0$ .*
- (v) *If  $\rho > e^{q/(p-1)}$ , then  $g^{-1}(s)^p/s$  is nondecreasing for  $s \geq 0$ .*
- (vi) *If  $\rho \geq e$ , then, for  $\phi \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ ,*

$$S(t)\phi \leq g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi)) \text{ for } t \geq 0.$$

*Proof.* By direct calculation, we have

$$g'(s) = [\log(\rho + s)]^{q-1} \left\{ \log(\rho + s) + \frac{qs}{s + \rho} \right\},$$

$$g''(s) = \frac{q[\log(s + \rho)]^{q-2}}{(s + \rho)^2} [s \{ \log(\rho + s) + q - 1 \} + 2\rho \log(\rho + s)].$$

Thus, (i) and (ii) hold.

(iii) Since  $\rho \geq e$ , we have

$$g(g_1(s)) = \frac{s}{[\log(\rho + s)]^q} \left[ \log \left( \rho + \frac{s}{[\log(\rho + s)]^q} \right) \right]^q$$

$$\leq \frac{s}{[\log(\rho + s)]^q} [\log(\rho + s)]^q = s \tag{2.3}$$

for  $s \geq 0$ . By (i), we see that  $g^{-1}(s)$  exists and it is increasing. By (2.3), we see that  $g_1(s) \leq g^{-1}(s)$  for  $s \geq 0$ .

(iv) Let  $\xi(s) := (g(g_1(s))/s)^{1/q} = \log(\rho + \frac{s}{[\log(\rho+s)]^q})/(\log(\rho + s))$ . Then, for each compact interval  $I \subset [0, \infty)$ , there is  $c > 0$  such that  $\xi(s) > c$  for  $s \in I$ . By L'Hospital's rule, we have

$$\lim_{s \rightarrow \infty} \xi(s) = \lim_{s \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1 + \frac{\rho}{s}}{1 + \frac{\rho}{s} [\log(\rho + s)]^q} \left\{ 1 - \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\rho}{s}} \frac{q}{\log(\rho + s)} \right\} = 1,$$

and hence there is  $c_0 > 0$  such that  $\xi(s) \geq c_0$  for  $s \geq 0$ . Thus,  $g^{-1}(c_0^q s) \leq g_1(s)$  for  $s \geq 0$ . Then, the conclusion holds.

(v) By (i), we see that  $g(\tau)$  is increasing. Let  $s := g(\tau)$ . Then,  $g^{-1}(s)^p/s = \tau^{p-1} [\log(\rho + \tau)]^{-q}$ . Since  $\rho > e^{q/(p-1)}$ , we have

$$\frac{d}{d\tau} \frac{\tau^{p-1}}{[\log(\rho + \tau)]^q} = \frac{\tau^{p-2}}{[\log(\rho + \tau)]^{q+1}} \left\{ (p - 1) \log(\rho + \tau) - \frac{q\tau}{\rho + \tau} \right\} > 0.$$

Thus,  $g^{-1}(s)^p/s$  is increasing for  $s \geq 0$ .

(vi) Because of (ii),  $g$  is convex. By Jensen's inequality, we see that  $g(S(t)\phi) \leq S(t)g(\phi)$ . Since  $g^{-1}$  exists and  $g^{-1}$  is increasing, the conclusion holds. The proof is complete. □



### 3. Existence

**Lemma 3.1.** *Let  $N \geq 1$  and  $p = 1 + 2/N$ . Assume that  $\phi \geq 0$ . If  $\phi \in X_q$  for some  $q \geq N/2$ , then (1.1) has a local-in-time nonnegative mild solution  $u(t)$ , and  $\|u(t)\|_\infty \leq Ct^{-N/2}(-\log t)^{-q}$  for small  $t > 0$ .*

*Proof.* First, we consider the case  $q = N/2$ . Let  $\rho \geq \max\{e^{q/(p-1)}, e\}$  be fixed. Let  $g$  be defined by (1.7). Here,  $q = N/2$  and  $g$  satisfies Lemma 2.5. We define

$$\bar{u}(t) := 2g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi)).$$

We show that  $\bar{u}$  is a supersolution. By Lemma 2.5(vi), we have

$$S(t)\phi \leq g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi)) = \frac{\bar{u}(t)}{2}. \tag{3.1}$$

Next, we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \int_0^t S(t-s)f(\bar{u}(s))ds \\ &= 2^p \int_0^t S(t-s) \left[ S(s)g(\phi) \frac{g^{-1}(S(s)g(\phi))^p}{S(s)g(\phi)} \right] ds \\ &\leq 2^p S(t)g(\phi) \int_0^t \left\| \frac{g^{-1}(S(s)g(\phi))^p}{S(s)g(\phi)} \right\|_\infty ds \\ &\leq 2^p g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi)) \left\| \frac{S(t)g(\phi)}{g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi))} \right\|_\infty \int_0^t \left\| \frac{g^{-1}(S(s)g(\phi))^p}{S(s)g(\phi)} \right\|_\infty ds. \end{aligned} \tag{3.2}$$

Since  $g(\phi) \in L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$ , by Proposition 2.4(ii) we have

$$\|S(t)g(\phi)\|_\infty \leq C_0 t^{-N/2}. \tag{3.3}$$

By Lemma 2.5(v), we see that  $g^{-1}(u)^p/u$  is nondecreasing for  $u \geq 0$ . Using (3.3) and Lemma 2.5(iv), we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \left\| \frac{g^{-1}(S(s)g(\phi))^p}{S(s)g(\phi)} \right\|_\infty \leq \frac{g^{-1}(\|S(s)g(\phi)\|_\infty)^p}{\|S(s)g(\phi)\|_\infty} \\ &\leq \frac{g^{-1}(C_0 s^{-N/2})^p}{C_0 s^{-N/2}} \leq \frac{C_1^p C_0^{2/N}}{s [\log(\rho + C_0 C_1 s^{-N/2})]^{pq}} \leq \frac{C_0^{2/N} C_1'}{s (-\log s)^{pq}} \end{aligned} \tag{3.4}$$

for  $0 < s < s_0(C_0)$ , where  $C_1'$  is a constant independent of  $C_0$ . Using Lemma 2.5(iii) and (3.3), we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \left\| \frac{S(t)g(\phi)}{g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi))} \right\|_\infty \leq \left\| \frac{S(t)g(\phi)}{g_1(S(t)g(\phi))} \right\|_\infty = \left\| [\log(\rho + S(t)g(\phi))]^q \right\|_\infty \\ &\leq [\log(\rho + \|S(t)g(\phi)\|_\infty)]^q \leq [\log(\rho + C_0 t^{-N/2})]^q \leq C_2' (-\log t)^q \end{aligned} \tag{3.5}$$

for  $0 < t < t_0(C_0)$ , where  $g_1$  is defined in Lemma 2.5 and  $C'_2$  is a constant independent of  $C_0$ . By (3.4) and (3.5) we have

$$\begin{aligned} & \left\| \frac{S(t)g(\phi)}{g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi))} \right\|_\infty \int_0^t \left\| \frac{g^{-1}(S(s)g(\phi))^p}{S(s)g(\phi)} \right\|_\infty ds \\ & \leq C_0^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2 (-\log t)^q \int_0^t \frac{ds}{s(-\log s)^{pq}} \\ & = C_0^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2 (-\log t)^q \frac{2}{N(-\log t)^q} = C_0^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2 \frac{2}{N} \end{aligned} \tag{3.6}$$

for  $0 < t < \min\{s_0(C_0), t_0(C_0)\}$ . By Proposition 2.4(ii), we can take  $C_0 > 0$  such that  $2^{p+1}C_0^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2/N < 1$ . By (3.1), (3.2) and (3.6), we have

$$\mathcal{F}[\bar{u}](t) = S(t)\phi + \int_0^t S(t-s)f(\bar{u}(s))ds \leq \frac{1}{2}\bar{u}(t) + \frac{1}{2}\bar{u}(t) = \bar{u}(t)$$

for small  $t > 0$ . Thus, there is  $T > 0$  such that  $\mathcal{F}[\bar{u}] \leq \bar{u}$  for  $0 < t < T$ , and hence  $\bar{u}$  is a supersolution. By Lemma 2.1, we see that there is  $T > 0$  such that (1.1) has a solution for  $0 < t < T$ , and  $u(t)$  is clearly nonnegative. Moreover,

$$0 \leq u(t) \leq \bar{u}(t) = 2g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi)) \leq Ct^{-\frac{N}{2}}(-\log t)^{-q}, \tag{3.7}$$

which is the estimate in the assertion. We show that  $u(t) \in C([0, T], L^1(\mathbb{R}^N))$ . Since  $\|g^{-1}(u)\|_1 \leq C \|u\|_1$ , by (3.6) and Proposition 2.4(i) we have

$$\begin{aligned} \|u(t) - S(t)\phi\|_1 & \leq \left\| \int_0^t S(t-s)f(\bar{u}(s))ds \right\|_1 \leq C_0^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2 \frac{2}{N} \|g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi))\|_1 \\ & \leq C_0^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2 \frac{2}{N} C \|S(t)g(\phi)\|_1 \leq C_0^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2 \frac{2}{N} C' \|g(\phi)\|_1 \end{aligned} \tag{3.8}$$

for small  $t > 0$ , where  $C'$  is independent of  $C_0$ . By Proposition 2.4(ii), we can take  $C_0 > 0$  arbitrary small, and hence

$$\|u(t) - S(t)\phi\|_1 \rightarrow 0 \text{ as } t \downarrow 0.$$

Since  $S(t)$  is a strongly continuous semigroup on  $L^1(\mathbb{R}^N)$  (see e.g., [9, Section 48.2]), we have

$$\|u(t) - \phi\|_1 \leq \|u(t) - S(t)\phi\|_1 + \|S(t)\phi - \phi\|_1 \rightarrow 0 \text{ as } t \downarrow 0. \tag{3.9}$$

It follows from (3.2) and (3.6) that  $\left\| \int_0^t S(t-s)f(\bar{u}(s))ds \right\|_1 < \infty$  for  $0 < t < T$ . We see that if  $0 < t < T$ , then

$$\|u(t+h) - u(t)\|_1 \rightarrow 0 \text{ as } h \rightarrow 0. \tag{3.10}$$

By (3.9) and (3.10), we see that  $u(t) \in C([0, T], L^1(\mathbb{R}^N))$ . The proof of (i) is complete.

Next, we consider the case  $q > N/2$ . The argument is the same until (3.6). We have

$$\begin{aligned} & \left\| \frac{S(t)g(\phi)}{g^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi))} \right\|_\infty \int_0^t \left\| \frac{g^{-1}(S(s)g(\phi))^p}{S(s)g(\phi)} \right\|_\infty ds \\ & \leq C_0^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2 (-\log t)^q \int_0^t \frac{ds}{s(-\log s)^{pq}} \\ & = \frac{C_1^{2/N} C'_1 C'_2}{pq - 1} (-\log t)^{1 - \frac{2q}{N}} \end{aligned} \tag{3.11}$$

instead of (3.6). Since the RHS of (3.11) goes to 0 as  $t \downarrow 0$ , the rest of the proof is almost the same with obvious modifications. In particular, (3.7) holds even for  $q > N/2$ . We omit the details.  $\square$

We consider (1.6), where  $\phi$  is given in (1.1). By Lemma 3.1, we see that (1.6) has a local-in-time solution which is denoted by  $w(t)$ . We consider the sequence  $(u_n)_{n=0}^\infty$  defined by (1.8). Then, the following lemma says that  $\|u_n(t)\|_\infty$  can be controlled by  $w(t)$ .

**Lemma 3.2.** *Let  $u_n$  be as defined by (1.8), and let  $w$  be a solution of (1.6) on  $(0, T)$ . Then,*

$$-w(t) \leq u_n(t) \leq w(t) \text{ for a.e. } x \in \mathbb{R}^N \text{ and } 0 < t < T. \tag{3.12}$$

*Proof.* It is clear from the definitions of  $u_0$  and  $w(t)$  that

$$u_0(t) \leq w(t) \text{ for } 0 < t < T.$$

We assume that  $u_{n-1}(t) \leq w(t)$  on  $(0, T)$ . Then, we have

$$\begin{aligned} w(t) &= S(t)|\phi| + \int_0^t S(t-s)f(w(s))ds \\ &\geq S(t)\phi + \int_0^t S(t-s)f(u_{n-1}(s))ds \\ &= u_n(t), \end{aligned}$$

and hence  $u_n(t) \leq w(t)$  for  $0 < t < T$ . Thus, by induction we see that, for  $n \geq 0$ ,

$$u_n(t) \leq w(t) \text{ on } 0 < t < T. \tag{3.13}$$

It is clear that  $u_0(t) \geq -w(t)$  for  $0 < t < T$ . We assume that  $u_{n-1}(t) \geq -w(t)$  on  $(0, T)$ . Then, we have

$$\begin{aligned} u_n(t) &= S(t)\phi + \int_0^t S(t-s)f(u_{n-1}(s))ds \\ &\geq -S(t)|\phi| + \int_0^t S(t-s)f(-w(s))ds = -w(t), \end{aligned}$$

and hence,  $u_n(t) \geq -w(t)$  on  $(0, T)$ . Thus, by induction we see that for  $n \geq 0$ ,

$$-w(t) \leq u_n(t) \text{ on } 0 < t < T. \tag{3.14}$$

By (3.13) and (3.14), we see that (3.12) holds. □

*Proof of Theorem 1.3.* (i) Let  $(u_n)_{n=0}^\infty$  be defined by (1.8). Using an induction argument with a parabolic regularity theorem, we can show that, for each  $n \geq 1$ ,  $u_n \in C^{2,1}(\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T))$  and  $u_n$  satisfies the equation

$$\partial_t u_n = \Delta u_n + f(u_{n-1}) \text{ in } \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)$$

in the classical sense. Let  $K$  be an arbitrary compact subset in  $\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)$ , and let  $K_1, K_2$  be two compact sets such that  $K \subset K_1 \subset K_2 \subset \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)$ . Because of Lemma 3.2,  $f(u_{n-1})$  is bounded in  $C(K_2)$ . By a parabolic regularity theorem, we see that  $u_n$  is bounded in  $C^{\gamma, \gamma/2}(K_1)$ . Using a parabolic regularity theorem again, we see that  $u_{n+1}$  is bounded in  $C^{2+\gamma, 1+\gamma/2}(K)$ .

In the following, we use a diagonal argument to obtain a convergent subsequence in  $\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)$ . Let  $Q_j := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^N \mid |x| \leq j\} \times \left[ \frac{T}{j+2}, \frac{(j+1)T}{j+2} \right]$ . Since  $(u_n)_{n=3}^\infty$  is bounded in  $C^{2,1}(Q_1)$ , by Ascoli–Arzera theorem there is a subsequence  $(u_{1,k}) \subset (u_n)$  and  $u_1^* \in C(Q_1)$  such that  $u_{1,k} \rightarrow u_1^*$  in  $C(Q_1)$  as  $k \rightarrow \infty$ . Since  $(u_{1,k})_{k=1}^\infty$  is bounded in  $C^{2,1}(Q_2)$ , there is a subsequence  $(u_{2,k}) \subset (u_{1,n})$  and  $u_2^* \in C(Q_2)$  such that  $u_{2,k} \rightarrow u_2^*$  in  $C(Q_2)$  as  $k \rightarrow \infty$ . Repeating this argument, we have a double sequence  $(u_{j,k})$  and a sequence  $(u_j^*)$  such that, for each  $j \geq 1$ ,  $u_{j,k} \rightarrow u_j^*$  in  $C(Q_j)$  as  $k \rightarrow \infty$ . We still denote  $u_{n,n}$  by  $u_n$ , i.e.,  $u_n := u_{n,n}$ . It is clear that  $u_{j_1}^* \equiv u_{j_2}^*$  in  $Q_{j_1}$  if  $j_1 \leq j_2$ . Since  $\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T) = \bigcup_{j=1}^\infty Q_j$ , there is  $u^* \in C(\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T))$  such that  $u_n \rightarrow u^*$  in  $C(K)$  as  $n \rightarrow \infty$  for every compact set  $K \subset \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)$ . In particular,

$$u_n \rightarrow u^* \text{ a.e. in } \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T). \tag{3.15}$$

Let  $w$  be a solution of (1.6). It follows from Lemma 3.2 that  $|u_n(x, t)| \leq w(x, t)$ . Since

$$|G_t(x - y)u_n(y, t)| \leq |G_t(x - y)w(y, t)| \text{ for } y \in \mathbb{R}^N,$$

and

$$G_t(x - y)w(y, t) \in L^1_y(\mathbb{R}^N),$$

by the dominated convergence theorem we see that

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} S(t)u_n &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G_t(s - y)u_n(y, t)dy \\ &= \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G_t(s - y)u^*(y, t)dy = S(t)u^*. \end{aligned} \tag{3.16}$$

By (3.2) and (3.6), we see that if  $T > 0$  is small, then

$$\int_0^t \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G_{t-s}(x-y)f(w(y,s))dyds \leq Cg^{-1}(S(t)g(\phi)) < \infty$$

for each  $(x, t) \in \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)$ , and hence  $G_{t-s}(x-y)f(w(y,s)) \in L^1_{(y,s)}(\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T))$ . Since

$$\begin{aligned} &|G_{t-s}(x-y)f(u_{n-1}(y,s))| \\ &\leq |G_{t-s}(x-y)f(w(y,s))| \text{ for a.e. } (y,s) \in \mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T) \end{aligned}$$

and

$$G_{t-s}(x-y)f(w(y,s)) \in L^1_{(y,s)}(\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)),$$

by the dominated convergence theorem we see that

$$\begin{aligned} \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^t S(t-s)f(u_{n-1}(s))ds &= \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} \int_0^t \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G_{t-s}(x-y)f(u_{n-1}(y,s))dyds \\ &= \int_0^t \int_{\mathbb{R}^N} G_{t-s}(x-y)f(u^*(y,s))dyds = \int_0^t S(t-s)f(u^*(s))ds. \end{aligned} \tag{3.17}$$

Thus, we take a limit of  $u_n = \mathcal{F}[u_{n-1}]$ . By (3.15), (3.16) and (3.17), we see that  $u^*(t) = \mathcal{F}[u^*](t)$  for  $0 < t < T$ .

Since  $|u_n| \leq w$ , we see that  $|u^*| \leq w$ . Since  $|u^*| \leq w$  in  $\mathbb{R}^N \times (0, T)$ , by (3.8) and the arbitrariness of  $C_0 > 0$  we have

$$\begin{aligned} \|u^*(t) - S(t)\phi\|_1 &= \left\| \int_0^t S(t-s)f(u^*(s))ds \right\|_1 \\ &\leq \left\| \int_0^t S(t-s)f(w(s))ds \right\|_1 \rightarrow 0 \text{ as } t \downarrow 0. \end{aligned}$$

Then,  $\|u^*(t) - \phi\|_1 \leq \|u^*(t) - S(t)\phi\|_1 + \|S(t)\phi - \phi\|_1 \rightarrow 0$  as  $t \downarrow 0$ . Since  $\left\| \int_0^t S(t-s)f(w(s))ds \right\|_1 < \infty$  for  $0 < t < T$ , we can show by a similar way to the proof of Lemma 3.1 that  $u^*(t) \in C((0, T), L^1(\mathbb{R}^N))$ . Thus,  $u^*(t) \in C([0, T), L^1(\mathbb{R}^N))$ , and hence  $u^*(t)$  is a mild solution. Since  $|u^*(t)| \leq w(t)$ , by Lemma 3.1 we have (1.3). The proof of (i) is complete. □

### 4. Nonexistence

Let  $0 \leq q < N/2$  be fixed. Then, there is  $0 < \varepsilon < N/2 - q$ . We define  $\phi_0$  by

$$\phi_0(x) := \begin{cases} |x|^{-N} (-\log|x|)^{-\frac{N}{2}-1+\varepsilon} & \text{if } |x| < 1/e, \\ 0 & \text{if } |x| \geq 1/e. \end{cases} \tag{4.1}$$

**Lemma 4.1.** *Let  $0 \leq q < N/2$ , and let  $\phi_0$  be defined by (4.1). Then, the following holds:*

- (i)  $\phi_0 \in X_q (\subset L^1(\mathbb{R}^N))$ .
- (ii) *The function  $\phi_0$  does not satisfy (2.1) for any  $T > 0$ .*

*Proof.* (i) We write  $\phi_0(r) = r^{-N} (-\log r)^{-N/2-1+\varepsilon}$  for  $0 < r < 1/e$ . Since  $\log(e + s) \leq 1 + \log s$  for  $s \geq 0$ , we have

$$\log(e + |\phi_0|) \leq 1 - N \log r - \left(\frac{N}{2} + 1 - \varepsilon\right) \log(-\log r) \leq -2N \log r \quad (4.2)$$

for  $0 < r < 1/e$ . Let  $B(\tau) := \{x \in \mathbb{R}^N \mid |x| < \tau\}$ . Using (4.2), we have

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{B(1/e)} |\phi_0| [\log(e + |\phi_0|)]^q dx &\leq \omega_{N-1} \int_0^{1/e} \frac{(2N)^q (-\log r)^q r^{N-1} dr}{r^N (-\log r)^{N/2+1-\varepsilon}} \\ &\leq (2N)^q \omega_{N-1} \int_0^{1/e} \frac{dr}{r (-\log r)^{N/2+1-q-\varepsilon}} = \frac{(2N)^q \omega_{N-1}}{\frac{N}{2} - q - \varepsilon} < \infty, \end{aligned} \quad (4.3)$$

where  $\omega_{N-1}$  denotes the area of the unit sphere  $\mathbb{S}^{N-1}$  in  $\mathbb{R}^N$ . By (4.3), we see that  $\phi_0 \in X_q$ .

(ii) Suppose the contrary, i.e., there exists  $\gamma_0 > 0$  such that (2.1) holds. When  $0 < \tau < 1/e$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} \int_{B(\tau)} \phi_0(x) dx &= \omega_{N-1} \int_0^\tau \frac{dr}{r (-\log r)^{N/2+1-\varepsilon}} \\ &= \frac{C}{(-\log \tau)^{N/2-\varepsilon}}, \end{aligned}$$

where  $C > 0$  is independent of  $\tau$ . Then,

$$\gamma_0 \geq \frac{\int_{B(\tau)} \phi_0(x) dx}{(-\log \tau)^{-N/2}} \geq C (-\log \tau)^\varepsilon \rightarrow \infty \text{ as } \tau \downarrow 0.$$

which is a contradiction. Thus, the conclusion holds. □

*Proof of Theorem 1.3 (ii).* Let  $0 \leq q < N/2$ . It follows from Lemma 4.1(i) that  $\phi_0 \in X_q$ . By Lemma 4.1(ii), we see that there does not exist  $\gamma_0 > 0$  such that (2.1) holds. By Proposition 2.2, the problem (1.1) with  $\phi_0$  has no nonnegative integral solution. □

### 5. Uniqueness

*Proof of Theorem 1.5.* Let  $q > N/2$ . Suppose that (1.1) has two integral solutions  $u(t)$  and  $v(t)$ . Using Young’s inequality and the inequality  $\|u(t)\|_\infty \leq Ct^{-N/2} (-\log t)^{-q}$ , we have

$$\begin{aligned}
\|u(t) - v(t)\|_1 &\leq \int_0^t \left\| G_{t-s} * \left\{ \left( p|u|^{p-1} + p|v|^{p-1} \right) (u - v) \right\} \right\|_1 ds \\
&\leq p \int_0^t \|G_{t-s}\|_1 \left( \|u\|_\infty^{p-1} + \|v\|_\infty^{p-1} \right) ds \sup_{0 \leq s \leq t} \|u(s) - v(s)\|_1 \\
&\leq C \int_0^t \frac{ds}{\{s^{N/2}(-\log s)^q\}^{p-1}} \sup_{0 \leq s \leq t} \|u(s) - v(s)\|_1.
\end{aligned}$$

Since

$$\int_0^t s^{-N(p-1)/2} (-\log s)^{-(p-1)q} ds = \frac{N(-\log t)^{1-2q/N}}{2q - N}$$

and  $1 - 2q/N < 0$ , we can choose  $T > 0$  such that  $C \int_0^t s^{-N(p-1)/2} (-\log s)^{-(p-1)q} ds < 1/2$  for every  $0 \leq t \leq T$ . Then, we have

$$\sup_{0 \leq t \leq T} \|u(t) - v(t)\|_1 \leq \frac{1}{2} \sup_{0 \leq s \leq T} \|u(s) - v(s)\|_1,$$

which implies the uniqueness.  $\square$

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